

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Wetlands Management Program

1. PURPOSE: To provide the status of Fort Drum's Wetlands Management Program

2. INFORMATION:

a. There are approximately 20,000 acres of federal jurisdictional "waters of the United States", including wetlands, on Fort Drum. The wetland types include forested wetlands, freshwater marshes, riparian areas, scrub-shrub wetlands, and wet meadows. These wetlands can be found in all areas of the installation. Due to the high incidence of wetlands, many of our activities may trigger federal jurisdiction and require some type of US Army, Corps of Engineers (COE) regulatory permit action.

b. Since training activities such as digging, earthmoving, and some tracked vehicle maneuvers may need permits granted by outside State and federal agencies, early notification of the PW, Environmental Division is imperative. The acquisition of these outside permits can take a considerable amount of time. If insufficient time is allowed for environmental review and subsequent permit acquisition, the timely accomplishment of the proposed training activity will be jeopardized. Some of these permit actions may only take a few weeks and/or months, but depending on the extent of the impacts, it could take longer than a year. Proper planning and coordination will allow the PW, Environmental Division to assist you in accomplishing your mission.

c. Since 1994 numerous permits were acquired for construction activities on Range construction and other maintenance activities throughout the post. In some cases through avoidance or minimization of wetland impacts, no mitigation was required.

d. To date, Fort Drum has established over 250 acres of protected areas including and surrounding over 100 acres for compensatory wetlands and over 130 acres for Mitigation Bank Sites. The Bank was constructed and established to provide compensation for unavoidable wetland impacts caused by future non-MCA construction projects as authorized by any required permits.

e. Compensatory Mitigation Wetlands and Mitigation Bank Sites were constructed and established and afforded protection through regulatory review and functional assessment by New York District Corps of Engineers. Wetland mitigation (including Bank) sites are not entirely off-limits to the training community, but do restrict those requiring ground-disturbing activities.

The following has been excerpted from the Fort Drum Wetlands Mitigation Banking Instrument, a document governing the establishment and use of the Bank at Fort

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Drum. In the Instrument Section 2.17, titled Degree of Perpetual Protection of the Bank Site, there is disclosed a list of the activities allowed in Mitigation Bank Sites, which are demarcated with signs reading "Off Limits to Vehicular Traffic by Order of the Commander":

- (1) Clearing or cutting;
- (2) Earthmoving, grading, cultivation, or filling;
- (3) Placement of refuse, wastes, sewage, other debris or any hazardous substances on the property;
- (4) Ditching, diking, dredging, channelizing, pumping, impounding, excavating;
- (5) Diverting or affecting the natural flow of surface or underground waters within, or out of the property;
- (6) Mining;
- (7) Spraying with biocides, except for removal of nuisance vegetation;
- (8) Introducing exotic species into the wetlands or otherwise altering the natural state of the wetlands;
- (9) Grazing of domesticated animals;
- (10) Raising of any structure in the wetlands or upland enhancement, whether temporary or permanent, except that minimal structures for the observation of wildlife and wetlands ecology may be constructed with the prior approval of the New York District Engineer;
- (11) Display of billboards, signs, or advertisements on or over the Property, except for the posting of no trespassing signs, signs identifying the conservation values of the Property or their protection, and/or identifying the owner of the Property.
- (12) Vehicular encroachment into the mitigation area (includes protected / maintained areas and uplands).

New wetland maps and orthographic quad photos have been received which update the existing National Wetlands Inventory maps and provide the installation with an excellent planning tool. The Fort Drum Environmental Division's Natural Resource Branch is in the process of completing a Natural Resource Management Unit (NRMU) inventory of all distinct cover types for the Installation. This provides information for making informed natural resources management decisions.

g. Constructing wetlands to mitigate impacted wetland acres is extremely costly. Avoidance of wetland impacts in training must be our first mitigation choice. The Directorate of Public Works (PW) Environmental Division administers the Wetlands Management Program. The point-of-contact (POC) for this program is the Wetlands Program Manager, located in building T-4848, (315) 772-4729; DSN 772.